

Prevention and Management of Non Communicable Diseases: A Policy Perspective

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Non communicable diseases (NCDs) are currently a leading cause of poor quality of life and death globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported an increase in the prevalence of NCDs in developing countries in the recent past. This trend is likely to impede development and retard the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This trend calls for concerted efforts to avert the situation. NCDs are driven by the negative effects of globalization, for example, unfair trade and irresponsible marketing, rapid and unplanned urbanization and increasingly sedentary lives. They are further exacerbated by other factors including tobacco use and availability, and cost and marketing of foods high in salt, fat and sugar. Although individual efforts like lifestyle change are required in fighting the immediate causes of NCDs, the underlying causes are well beyond individual efforts. Governments have a responsibility of protecting their citizens from emerging health issues by enacting and enforcing appropriate laws.

This paper analyses the efforts made by governments in the East African region towards prevention and control of NCDs. Although all the governments have put in place policy frameworks for prevention and control of NCDs, gaps still exist. Some of the policies also remain archive documents and others public relations documents. This paper brings into focus the importance of legislation in prevention and control of NCDs.

Key Words: *Non-Communicable Diseases; globalization, unfair trade; irresponsible marketing; sedentary lives, policies*